



Board of Education
School District No. 50 (Haida Gwaii)
Office of the Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Carey Stewart
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May 7, 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian,

First, I hope you and your family are safe and healthy as you read this letter. Thank you so much for your patience and understanding as we have been adjusting, like you, to the drastic changes in life during the last 6 weeks. The Board of Education is extremely appreciative of our students, parents, teachers, staff, and administrators for their positivity and flexibility during these trying times. A huge debt of gratitude also goes to all of our doctors, nurses, hospital employees, first responders, and our Haida Gwaii leaders for all they are doing to keep us safe and healthy.

As you know, distance learning for Haida Gwaii School District is in full motion. Our goal is to provide continuous educational opportunities and practice for students while schools have suspended face to face instruction.

While it is our responsibility to continue to educate our children, we also want to compassionately take into consideration the variety of difficulties that our families and employees are enduring during this time.

District Themes

Elementary School: Teachers are in regular contact with parents and students. Our Elementary teams are using websites for their students to access. Our students are regularly checking in with their teachers on Google Hangouts, through the phone, and via email. A few of our parents have requested paper-work packages. Teachers are providing families with weekly overviews and making sure to be available for contact throughout the day. Most school teams have dropped off art supplies, musical instruments, technological devices, and things like paper, pencils and erasers to support of the learning from home. In most schools, food coordinators are working exceptionally hard and supporting families with food.

Secondary School: High School Secondary teams have mainly connected with students using Google Classroom and Moodle. This is a primary way to hosting virtual classrooms where students log-in and receive lessons and can ask questions. The Secondary teams are working on expanding student academic support with digital devices like Chromebooks and laptops.

School counsellors have been completing regular check-ins with students throughout the week. Assignments and learning activities are completed online. High school teams have continued to focus on core academic courses and continue to look for ways to add elective courses. "Food to families" is running weekly as high schools and elementary schools are a combined team effort.

Secondary teams are looking at ways to continue the support for our students who still need Internet access or a device. We are grateful to Gwaii Trust for the approval of a large grant to add to the devices that will be available to students across the District. New devices should be available for student use very soon. Schools are keeping and maintaining clear and open lines of communication with students and parents.

Next focus with parents, are the scholarship committee, graduation ceremony, timetabling for the fall, and how to do them in the time of Coronavirus. Our Secondary team is asking for flexibility at this time as tasks develop.

Counseling Support: Our counseling team has created a “Counselling Corner” linked to our School District website. The team has posted many resources on the district webpage that may be especially relevant/helpful for our families and students. The team has reached out to the students and families who have said that they would like counselling on the surveys and have setup calls or video chat. Our Tech-Department has setup Google Hangouts in order to make this support happen.

Student Service Support: Learning Resource Teachers and Special Education Resource Teachers are continuing to check in with families and students. Individual Education Plan documents are being adjusted to reflect the goals of students while they participate in continuity of learning activities outside of the traditional classroom. Parents and teachers are working together to ensure the needs of diverse learners are being met as well as possible. Plans have had to change quickly due to the fact that we are not teaching students face to face. Learning Resource Teachers (LRTs) and Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) continue to connect with families and provide activities for students.

To this end, we acknowledge and commend the efforts and true goodness of our Principals, Vice-Principals, teachers and support staff who have worked tirelessly over the past 6 weeks to address the myriad of student needs, develop online learning resources, ensure that all students and families have equitable access to digital learning, and maintain a healthy line of communication with students and families.

In closing, I believe we all will be stronger when we come out on the other side of the COVID-19 Pandemic! History is being written! Together, we are holding the pen! Together, we will write the BEST story for our children!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carey Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carey Stewart
Superintendent
SD50 (Haida Gwaii)